

Jack's Jumper: Designing a Sensibility for Sustainable Clothing Communities

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Abstract

Jack's Jumper is a short film co-produced by an emergent community of participant researchers and film-makers R&A Collaborations as part of S4S Designing a Sensibility for Sustainable Clothing, an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research project. The need to improve the sustainability of fashion has been widely noted by academics (Black 2012; Fletcher 2008 and 2016), activist campaigns (Greenpeace and Fashion Revolution) and policy makers (Environmental Audit Committee Report on the Sustainability of the Fashion Industry, 2019). In this project the authors combine arts and social science methods, including film making, to develop a methodology for pro-environmental behaviour change and sustainable fashion through, literally and metaphorically, making a new relationship with clothes. The paper outlines the aims and purpose of the project and its methods, which include fashion design workshops designed to mimic phases of the lifecycle of clothing (making fibre and fabric, pattern cutting, mending, modifying, repurposing and clothes), films, wardrobe audits, clothing diaries and surveys. It focuses on the series of over twenty short films, including Jack's Jumper, to consider how they might function not only as reflective devices for those involved in the project and emotional prompts for future action, but also as an affective means of building and developing a sustainable fashion sensibility among wider audiences, and the role of aesthetics and emotion in this. As such, we argue that creative participatory fashion design practices are potentially an important tool for generating a sensibility of sustainability and therefore for informing policy on behaviour change.

Keywords: sustainable fashion, social design, community film, behaviour change, affect

Introduction

The dangers of 'fast fashion': a 'buy now, throw away tomorrow' culture (Birtwhistle et al., 2003; Michon et al., 2015) are increasingly known. High street and online retailers, motivated by economic drivers, provide low cost garments often designed to be worn only a few times. Clothes are manufactured to a lower quality than even in the recent past; garments are rarely thrown away because they are unfashionable rather than because they are worn out. Young women in particular prefer to buy several cheap disposable fashion items to one durable piece, while low costs discourage consumers from repairing worn out clothes (Morgan and Birtwhistle, 2009; Binotto and Payne, 2017). The need to improve clothing sustainability has long been recognised by fashion academics, in particular Professor Dilys Williams and her colleagues at London College of Fashion (LCF) (Black, 2012; Fletcher, 2012). More recently, fashion sustainability has been the focus of important activist campaigns: Greenpeace, Fashion Revolution, and the work of policy makers: All Party Parliamentary Group on Ethics and Sustainability in Fashion, DEFRA's Sustainable Clothing Roadmap (DEFRA 2011), and the Environmental Audit Committee's current investigation into the Sustainability of the

Fashion Industry. The latter's interim report concludes that the 'current exploitative and environmentally damaging model for fashion must change' (HoC, 2019).

To date relatively little research has been done on how changes in consumer/user behaviour might address this situation. While there have been creative attempts to provoke sustainable fashion (Fletcher, 2016), few studies have explored how engaging in community groups that upcycle 'waste' fabric, repurpose, modify and make clothing might not only raise consciousness about the appalling effects of the fast fashion industry, but also help to change everyday behaviour through affectual engagement with dress and textiles communities and processes, skills, materials and methods. This is the aim of the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project Designing a Sensibility for Sustainable Clothing (S4S), the subject of this paper which focuses on the role of film as a research method and device. The term 'sensibility' is of central importance. Defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as 'an understanding of or ability to decide about what is good or valuable, especially in connection with artistic or social activities' and in the Oxford Dictionary as the 'quality of being able to appreciate and respond to complex emotional or aesthetic influences', in the context of sustainable fashion it suggests the ability to identify and respond to a new set of clothing values, qualities, and practices as a cultural and social activity. Thinking about 'sensibility, moreover, acknowledges the importance of emotion as a driver of change in making sustainable fashion choices, as Otto Von Busch argued in his recent keynote at the Global Fashion conference, LCF, 2018. Finally the notion of forging a new 'sensibility' is valuable because, as in Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility*, it comprises change both in our outer 'sensible' lives - from physical sensations to sociability – and our inner thoughts, subjectivities and imaginaries.

The shock effect of films such as *The True Cost* (Morgan, 2015) and Stacey Dooley's documentary *Fashion's Dirty Secrets* (2018) is important, raising awareness about problems in the industry. They are less helpful in providing strategies for change. Extant research reveals the difficulty of reversing fast-fashion. Even those aware of fashion's externalities can get caught in a value-behaviour gap since quality fast-fashion items are more readily available in the market place and out-compete eco-fashion (Moon et al., 2015; D'Souza, 2015). To effect change we have to locate clothing behaviour within wider formations of identity, attachment, socially constructed values and psychological drives. Part of the answer lies not only in our intellectual but also in our affectual relationship with fashion, its deep connections with individual identities that are themselves rooted in socio-cultural attachments (Cassidy and Bennett, 2012; Kaiser, 2012). Fashion is not solely the preserve of global corporations, it is also about 'individual experience' something, as Dilys Williams recently observed on a radio programme about the environment, that makes 'climate change human in scale because each day each of us makes a decision about what we buy, what we wear, how we value it, how we care for it' (Fidgen, 2019). Furthermore, we know that buying things does not increase happiness. Speaking on the same programme, psychologist Lorraine Whitmarsh instead identifies three fundamental psychological human needs: 1) Autonomy, linked to experiencing an element of freedom of choice, 2) Competence, which comes from feeling good about doing something, and 3) Relatedness, which fulfils our need for social bonds with people. Interestingly, all three feature strongly as needs that are addressed in the S4S project.

Methodology

S4S is an interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers in the social sciences and the humanities: politics academics at University of Exeter and arts research practitioners at the University of Wolverhampton. The project also involves external partners: community organisations in Cornwall and the West Midlands, sustainable fashion designers Antiform, the campaign and advocacy group Fashion Revolution, and a group of specialist design, fashion, and environmental advisors. Concurrent linked launch events in Cornwall and the West Midlands attracted over a hundred people to listen to sustainable fashion experts, participate in maker workshops and help shape project research questions and themes. The forty people who elected to become involved in the project proper went on to attend between five and twenty workshops, keep clothing diaries, contribute to project films and discussion, and fill in questionnaires. Twelve participants attended all twenty workshops in Cornwall while twenty eight took part in at least five, and in some cases all twenty, workshops held in the West Midlands. All workshops lasted for a full day and they ran over a period of nine months in total. Around twenty people engaged in wardrobe audits, counting, logging and talking about items they own (Fletcher and Grimstad Klepp, 2017).

The project draws from three main strands of research. First, it extends work on social design, co-design, and the relationship between crafts and material affect (Armstrong et al., 2014; Hackney et al., 2016a and 2016b; Twigger Holroyd, 2017). Second, it contributes to the field of sustainable fashion and design (Fletcher 2016). Third, it contributes to research on behaviour change. Dominant approaches to behaviour change, which focus on information and fiscal incentives, have limited efficacy due to the value-behaviour gap. A novel aspect of the project is its use of the concept of ‘affect’, which refers to how socio-political contexts and emotional responses shape how people learn and behave. Affect is particularly relevant to fashion and consumerism, since the current economic system ‘mines affect for value’ by generating emotional responses to sell products and make profit (Clough, 2008). This is most notable in celebrity culture (Morgan and Birtwhistle, 2009), but it also pervades self-identification with clothing (Guy and Banim, 2000) in relation to peer approval (Roper and La Neice, 2009). Clothes generate culturally resonant affective markers of popular aesthetics and symbolic meanings that determine how individuals communicate their identities to others (Schofield and Schmidt, 2005). Integral to understanding ‘affect’ is recognition that emotions can be seen as sticky markers which attach to things and ideas, shaping how they are absorbed into identities. Understanding how to encourage a sensibility for sustainable clothing choices thus requires us to unpick the layers of emotional attachments that underpin human responses to what might otherwise seem to be ‘rational’ choices and transfer them to more sustainable behaviours.



Figure 1. Upcycling old shirts into aprons, Vintage Pattern Cutting Workshops, Black Country Living Museum

In order to explore this the team developed a range of research methods and tools, including experiential workshops, questionnaires, in-depth wardrobe audits, clothing diaries, interviews and short reflexive films, to replace standard notions of production and consumption with material, sensory and emotional practices generated within communities (Clay and Bradley Foster, 2007). A conceptual framework around thinking, feeling and doing: ‘think, feel, act’ was devised an embedded in mini-questionnaires and longer interviews to help participants identify and reflect on and their response processes throughout the project. The workshops were designed to mimic phases of the fashion system and lifecycle of clothing (making fibre and fabric, purchasing, mending, modifying and making clothes and dealing with waste fabric) (Figure 1) enabling participants to rethink their relationship with it (Barthes, 1990/1967/; Kaiser, 2012). They were conceptualised as spaces ‘in between’ the flow of fast fashion, short-circuiting it to some extent by emphasising quality, skill, labour and environmental impacts conventionally hidden in mainstream discourse. Skype conversations, film viewings, social media, and the exchange of collaboratively produced items at the end of each set of workshops, enabled groups in different regions to communicate and learn from one another.

Film/Making: Message and Aesthetic

Film-makers: Nina Constable (www.ninaconstable.co.uk) in Cornwall and R & A Collaborations in the West Midlands (www.racollaborations.co.uk) have established reputations in relevant fields: Constable is a documentary film-maker specialising in environmental issues and R&A, whose style of stop-motion photography playfully captures the temporality of arts processes, focus on craft. From the start film-making was envisaged as integral to research activities, and the film-makers operated as co-researchers. Films were

made iteratively throughout the workshops, with film-makers often participating in discussion and making activities. The films worked discursively to help participants' reflect on their and others' experience, to what extent and how ideas about sustainable fashion were developing or changing. Twenty seven two to five minute films have been completed to date and are available through the S4S Youtube channel, with more in process (S4S, 2019).

Academic work on film as a research and community resource is growing (Malik et al, 2017). Rethinking cultural diversity in the UK film sector). S4S builds on earlier research and community engagement undertaken by the team (AHRC-funded project Co-Producing CARE: Community Asset-based Research & Enterprise (Hackney, 2014); Mah Rana's film *One Day When We Were Young* (2016) (Rana and Hackney, 2018) which employed film as a reflexive device to examine the wider social value and health benefits of craft and creative making for community groups. One outcome was the identification of a filmic craft aesthetic that emphasises colour, texture, decoration, rhythm, pattern and detail. A visual rhetoric composed of close-up shots of making activities interspersed with stills of everyday objects in a shallow depth of field, and overlaid with a sound track composed of personal narrative, conversational dialogue, and ordinary sounds; conventions that convey a sense of 'specificity, value, excitement and intimacy' in an everyday environment (Hackney, 2013b: 30). The S4S films evidence a similar aesthetic. At first concerned with documenting workshop activities and capturing participant reflections on the high levels of time, skills and expertise involved to making everyday garments, (see *Fluff to Fibre: Spinning, Weaving, Dyeing* films, S4S, 2018), the film-makers gradually saw themes emerge as the project progressed. Detailing components of a sustainable fashion sensibility, these themes increasingly began to shape films that focused on: identity (*Jack's Jumper*), changing values (*Value*), time (*The Gift of Time*), economy (*Being Thrifty*), affective connection (*The Ripple Effect*), community and communication (*Group Chats*), science and environment (*Detergent Test*), family (*Family Influences*), abilities and asset-building (*Hidden Potential*), media (*Unravel: The True Cost*), heritage (*Reclaiming the 1940s*), facilitation and learning (*Hanny's Workshops*), and skill-building (*Upcycle*), material practice (*Make Do and Mend*).

Each film extrapolates a sensibility. In *Group Chats*, for instance, participants reflect on their appreciation of the particular qualities of interaction that occur when making together. One West Midlands' participant comments on the value of incidental interactions: 'lots of little bits of knowledge you pick up' makes the experience 'come to life'. Another notes the benefits of 'conversation' as 'the thoughts and ideas kind of travel and develop'. While a third observes the importance of intimacy for building trust and communication, and the benefits of the 'making workshop' as a distinct form of learning:

It's not just a formal, structured learning opportunity, it's a workshop in which you get involved with people from every angle. When you are talking to somebody that you are working with conversations can be much more intimate, can be about what you do, or can be about something totally different. But they tend to be a lot more personal and I think you reflect a lot more in intimate discussion ... You find out what people want and need and they become shared experiences. (West Midlands' participant, *Group Chats*, 2018)

Value shows how participants' understanding of value is inflected through their own personal experience and lives. One, for instance, who trained in fashion and worked in the industry in

the West Midlands before it moved to China, reflects on how the project has encouraged her to revisit and enhance her design and making skills, locating them in an ethical discourse; she has pledged not to buy any new clothes for a year, making, reusing and refashioning garments she already owns. Another participant, who came to Wolverhampton from Morocco and is highly skilled in crafts, talks about how the workshops gave her permission to make mistakes, be creative and play, something that had been impossible when she was younger and the emphasis was always on getting stitches right. The playful, risky aspects of making have emotional significance for her helping, as she puts it, 'what is on the inside to come out'. One of the male participants, who described dressmaking as engineering, emphasises the value of rethinking clothing in another context: 'thinking about clothes in terms of material rather than about clothes in terms of, do they fit? In other words, what can I get out of that? What can I make with it? How can I change it? What can I do with it?' A lot of decisions and that's challenging but also fun'.



Figure 2. Jack wearing his jumper, (De)Constructive/(Re)Constructive Knitting workshop, The Hive, West Midlands

Fashion and textiles are generally perceived as gendered activities, despite the long history of male designers and tailors. The association of dressmaking, knitting and repair with domestic crafts and, therefore, the domain of women is largely responsible (Parker 2010/1984). As an area that cuts across the realms of professional design and amateur practice initiatives such as S4S, which support new forms of sustainable fashion thinking, might arguably create more gender neutral spaces, and male role models are helpful here. While the S4S participants were principally women, some men did get involved including Jack who works for project partner the Hive, an arts centre in Shrewsbury. The film Jack's Jumper focuses as much on Jack himself, with his distinctive looks, long hair and softly spoken voice, as on the amazing jumper he made. It operates as a form of mini-portrait linking Jack's repurposing activities to his identity as he remakes an old grey jumper that was 'always in the cupboard but never came out'. The jumper was made during the 'Deconstructive/Reconstructive' knit workshops facilitated by Pat Dillon that develop methods introduced by designer researcher Amy Twigger Holroyd at the S4S West Midlands launch. Pat taught the group a range of stitches including Swiss darning and chain stitch, how to 'cardiganise' a garment (Twigger Holroyd, 2019), unpick stitches to add sections, and add pockets. She showed participants how the task was as much about design as technical knowledge. As a keen crafter who teaches crafts courses, the workshops enabled Jack to think about how these skills might be developed for sustainable fashion. On the film he talks us through his thought processes, how his ideas shifted and changed and the flexibility one can have with knitwear when armed with a little confidence and some skills. Having realised that his original idea to rework the jumper with an all-over pattern was unfeasible due to time constraints, Jack focused on the front and sleeves, removing a section he had added and reworking it as pockets. The striking result with geometric pattern in yellow and black – coincidentally the colours of Wolverhampton Wanderers FC – is bold, complex, eye-catching and distinctive (Figure 2).

Foregrounding themes of identity, value, quality, intimacy, trust, connection, community, media, critical thinking, creative making, asset-building, skill, reimagining heritage, playfulness, and risk, among others, the films help map out the many components involved in forging a sustainable fashion sensibility. Communicated through making activities and participant reflection, this sensibility is also manifest in the films' visual rhetoric, which helps communicate affectual qualities and emotions, something that emerged in participant discussion when the films were screened.

Feeling Film: Findings

Screening workshops were held for participants in Penryn and Shrewsbury to gather feedback about how the films might disseminate a sensibility for sustainable fashion and help change clothing behaviour. One of the most interesting findings was the degree to which participants in both groups identified the emotional 'feeling' qualities of the films as an important means to communicate project ideas, while also prompting themselves into future action. Feeling, it seems, is the emotional glue connecting sustainable thinking to action. Cornwall participants noted the emotional qualities of the film narratives, which they considered true to their experience of the project, making the films a powerful means for engendering a broader awareness of and sensibility for sustainable fashion in wider communities. West Midlands' participants observed how watching the films rekindled the collaborative ethos and

experience of the workshops: ‘the feeling ... from doing the workshops together and then the feeling can come back through the films’.

Discussion included responses that link to the psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness Whitmarsh identified in terms of personal fulfilment, skill and community. In the Midlands the films prompted group discussion about the social and environmental impacts of fast fashion but framed within a context of personal achievement and new aspirations. This included observations about clothes shopping, concerns about the loss of textiles skills in the workforce, and from the school curriculum. Many have restricted clothes shopping buying principally from charity shops or swapping, repairing and upcycling, reporting that buying new clothes just didn’t ‘feel right’, while some want to work with schools and/or start their own sustainable fashion business. Echoing Williams’ thinking, one participant observed that the workshops made change seem achievable because ‘they weren’t about saving the world, they were about darning’. Some people were drawn into the project principally because of their interests in making and textiles, their awareness of sustainable fashion emerging as the workshops progressed. Creativity, as such, operated as a form of ‘soft power’ or quiet activism, influencing thinking through repetitive creative acts and collaborative ‘making’ (Hackney, 2013a).

The community ethos that developed through the course of the workshops was considered by both groups to be central to the project’s appeal and effectiveness, and the value of comradeship, shared purpose and belonging was reiterated by participants on screen. One Midlands contributor commented on how much she enjoyed ‘Just watching how the groups really bonded and it was mentioned several times about fellowship and just getting on with people and you have a common project’. The composition of the groups shaped the nature of workshop activities and collaborations in distinct ways, something that also emerges in the films, enabling them to appeal to different constituencies. The generally younger and less skilled profile of the Cornwall contingent, for instance, meant that their workshops focused more on the building blocks of learning skills such as spinning, natural dyeing, weaving, sewing and crochet. The workshops were like a ‘school’ ‘where we really learned’, one participant observed, whereas the West Midlands films showed people coming together to use existing skills. The West Midlands participants, a more mature demographic on the whole, focused on designing, remaking and upcycling garments, giving a new life to existing clothing. Both groups appreciated how the films provided insight into the other’s activities, stimulating new interests and approaches. A Cornwall participant remarked on how - having for the first time designed and made his own patterns - one of the male Midlands participants saw his mother’s dressmaking skills differently, referring to her as a designer, something that in turn encouraged her to think of herself as a designer, an example of social design in action (Kimbell, 2011) (Figure 3). The Cornwall group felt that the variety of age and gender in the West Midlands’ films underlines how making and mending is suitable and attainable for everyone. Several participants brought their children to workshops - dressmaking, embroidery and leather work seem to have particular appeal for younger people – and a number of men attended. The broader socio-demographic range in the Midlands films, moreover, was generally perceived as an important model for learning through collaboration and exchange. Participants noted how approaches taken in the two locations were different but complementary, with a closer focus on micro elements of social collaboration and making

in the Midlands (see Working Together) and a greater emphasis on macro concerns of fashion, sustainability and change at a global level in Cornwall (Unravel: The True Cost).



Figure 3. Male participant in the Vintage Pattern Cutting workshops, Black Country Living Museum

The films also show how issues of partnership and place shape participant experience, offering varied learning opportunities and suggesting different motivations. The Cornwall films, which are set in a variety of venues including village halls, community spaces and artists' studios, communicate a sense of crafts practice embedded in nature, community and the cultural heritage of Cornwall, a location historically associated with crafts and innovative arts practice. In contrast, partnered with the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, the dressmaking workshops in the West Midlands (Hidden Potential for instance) were located in the heart of the Midlands, a region with a strong industrial heritage. Many participants were museum volunteers who wear historic costume and the dressmaking project responded to their interest in making clothes from original patterns for the annual 1940s weekend that the museum hosts. The Cornwall group expressed concerns that the past can sometimes be a distraction - different economic circumstances, different understandings of fashion, and the fact that we are not currently being rationed - aligning sustainable fashion with a sentimental heritage of 'make-do-and-mend'. Everyone, nevertheless, appreciated that we can learn important lessons about value and quality from the past, especially through the experiential act of actually making clothes that are historically accurate to understand how they were created and cared for. These reflections prompted a general discussion about the poor quality of clothing today: thin fabric and poor stitching leading to a short lifespan for garments. The Cornwall group was impressed by the creative approach to history taken by a member of the Midlands group who applies a ration token system to limit her own clothes purchasing today.

As important as the films are in communicating themes about and approaches to a sensibility for sustainable fashion, participants' perceptions of their affect, as an emotional conduit and memetic device seem particularly revealing. Prompting them to recall how it *felt* to be part of the project, the conventions of colour, texture, detail, light, close-ups, personal stories, and temporal slowness in the films were also considered to communicate feelings of emotional closeness, trust, intimacy, authenticity, honesty and pleasure that would be equally available to wider audiences who hadn't attended the workshops. The West Midland's group, watching the films in chronological order in three batches with time for discussion after each, reflected on how the short episodic pieces document their journey and their growing awareness of what a 'sensibility for sustainability' might mean. This not only involved idea development, but also how their feelings and behaviour patterns changed as they found their place in the group, became more confident in discussion, in their skills in adapting and making garments, as well as their knowledge about sustainable fashion. After viewing the first set one participant remarked, 'it'll be interesting to see by the time you've seen all of them whether you've captured that actual journey because that very first opening sort of session I don't think we really were aware of what kind of journey we were really going to step onto'. After the second set the same participant observed, 'You can start to see the change happening' 'It's changing, it's changing your habit pattern isn't it'. Others noted how the films might serve as means to connect and imaginatively engage with the experience of working in a community, even when working alone: '[A]s a body of work it's a lovely, a lovely portfolio to look at and just kind of keep remembering some of the ethos', 'it's reminding that actually when we do things together we're probably more productive as well' and 'by doing things together it becomes a pleasurable thing rather than a weight on your shoulders you know'. Another participant talked about how the films will help to keep the feelings and habits formed at the workshop alive for her:

It's been a nice reminder of the journey actually and I think I probably will watch them to keep my momentum going myself. I think the changes have been made up here so when I go and buy new clothes or you know I'm looking at where they're from I'm not necessarily going to go to those cheap chains anymore. So that's kind of, that's integrally changed. But I think it's too easy to get wrapped up in so once you move away from the project it's ... if I sustain it I'm going to get the feeling back again.
(West Midland's participant, 2018)

Viewing the films helps reconnect with the 'feeling' of participation and the activities, ethos and aims of the group, a feeling which, in the participant's view, would prompt future action. This prioritisation of feeling suggests how new emotional attachments are being forged through a sustainable fashion sensibility, provoking more ethical clothing behaviours and sustainable clothing identities.

The project films capture workshop activities rather than wardrobe audits, largely because of issues of ethics and privacy. The wardrobe audits, however, were a very useful part of the research, contributing in-depth qualitative reflection about and insight as well as quantitative data about behaviour change via 'before and after' project 'clothes counts'. They were popular with participants in both locations who found they helped them to review their clothes, think about what they mean to them, and what the sustainability implications are. Participants found the audits a key motivating factor for behaviour change, partly due to the

feelings of exposure, having shared the contents of their wardrobe, that most intimate domain, with others. Many reported thinking differently:

When I'm going through my wardrobe now I definitely look at things with a different eye you know I think what shall I do with that, does it go to the charity shop or is it something you know ... I look at it and think can I make it into something new and the grey cells start working and then ... or does it go into my kind of bag of stuff I can use for jewellery making or whatever. (West Midland's participant, 2018)

Without exception all participants found that they had more clothes than had been anticipated, reflecting wider national trends; the sustainable fashion charity TRAIID found that 23 % of Londoner's clothes remain unused (TRAID, 2018). Both groups got excited about the potential for developing an online version of the 'audit' as a means to scale up project impact. Conducted regularly, wardrobe audits could be a useful tool to sustain and disseminate the S4S sensibility, building a healthy 'self-auditing' sustainable mentality and clothing culture into everyday life the same way that many habitually use 'fit bits' or attend a gym.

After watching the films participants reflected on their clothing behaviour post-project, what they will wear, the degree to which they will upcycle and repurpose clothing, and how much they will buy. In Cornwall a principal concern was to develop a self-reflective mentality, slow down and 'pause' before buying, asking oneself, 'do I really need this item? How and where was it made? How can I look after it?' For both groups the films sparked reflection back over their months of involvement in the project, as they realised how their behaviour has changed. Several claimed not to have bought any clothes; some have taken a pledge to always buy second-hand or swap with friends and family, accepting new clothes only as gifts. Others now judge the clothes in shops as unacceptably poor quality and not worth the social and environmental 'cost'. They reflected that this change had occurred gradually through a 'process of doing things with the group', rather than any prescriptive demands 'directly stopping you buying things'. The Cornwall group particularly valued the practical skills they had gained, several continue to participate in sewing groups, and some have even bought a sewing machine. West Midland's participants valued the community experience as well as the opportunities it offered to develop and share creative practice, skills and knowledge. Equally, both groups were aware of the challenges involved in taking this work beyond the 'inner circle' of the project and change behaviour in a 'fast fashion world'. Concerns were raised that S4S might resonate more with 'crafty folk' whose interest in making made them more receptive to its messages about sustainability. The films were considered an essential component in spreading the message and method through personal, professional and partner networks, including Fashion Revolution's global network, and contacts with local businesses in the Midlands and South West.

Conclusion: Fashioning a Sustainable Sensibility

'Think, Feel, Act', in many ways, has become the governing mantra of this project. The ongoing analysis of research findings is gradually revealing both what a sensibility for sustainable clothing might mean and the important role that emotion plays in achieving it, as matter, feelings, ideas and thoughts interact, leading to shifts in perception and behaviour change (Ahmed, 2004). Understanding how this works is central to understanding how the project effect (and affect) might reach beyond the initial group of workshop participants.

Participant discussion suggests how the films might operate not only as reflective but also as affective devices: emotional prompts reconnecting participants with their own ‘project journey’, and a means to affect a sustainable fashion sensibility on a wider scale. S4S involves requires us to rethink our clothing behaviours. In the process we reimagine our relationship with things, people, the planet, and ultimately our own identities. This can be exciting and pleasurable as we gain skills, get creative, connect with like-minded groups, become knowledgeable, and find ways to effect change. Above all, it means a fundamental shift from passive bystander to active agent as a sustainable fashion sensibility becomes integral to, and embedded in, our everyday lives. The research team are well aware of certain limitations in the project design, the fact that participants were self-selecting for instance. We do not see this as negative, however, because it fits with our proposal that behaviour change results from connecting with people’s inner desires, subjectivities, pleasures and motivations, and in this case this was achieved through their interest in creative crafting, sewing and related activities, despite a varied level of skill. Having fully analysed the project data, our aim is to apply for Follow on Funding for Impact and Engagement to trial the S4S method with other groups, including younger people, and explore how it might be modified to incorporate additional motivations.

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S4S FILMS: Currently there are twenty eight films on the S4S Youtube channel, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCISPU0KuQXLMtSolKRSE8Eg>. Accessed 12.03.2019

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